



The Coalition Weekly Report Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Volume 3

Number 30

Incidents

Yellowstone NP Concession Employee Arrested For Weapon, Drug Possession

A concession kitchen worker who reportedly made white supremacist and threatening comments was charged with drug and firearms crimes in federal court on August 15th.

Timothy Stevens, 22, was charged with delivery of a controlled substance, possession of a controlled substance, and possession of a firearm in violation of national park rules. He was scheduled to make his initial appearance at the federal Yellowstone Justice Center in Mammoth Hot Springs this past Monday.

On the morning of August 10th, the manager of the Roosevelt Lodge told a ranger that Stevens would be receiving a shipment of drugs, that he had firearms in his vehicle, and that he had been making white supremacist comments. The manager also told the ranger that one of Stevens' roommates had expressed concerns that Stevens could become "an active shooter." Three other co-workers came to the lodge's human resources office to file similar complaints.

Another co-worker said that in June he went shooting with Stevens, who had two handguns and a shotgun. That co-worker said that he'd seen Stevens high on marijuana and possibly cocaine. He added that Stevens told him that "given the right tools and opportunity he could and would hurt someone based on his point of view," according to the criminal complaint.

On the evening of August 10th, two rangers went to the kitchen where Stevens was cutting cantaloupe, saw that he was speaking nervously with a co-worker, and asked him to step outside. Stevens told them that he felt that he was being targeted by his co-workers because he is a "white redneck" and that he would be a "protector" if anything ever happened at Roosevelt Lodge. He added that he had two handguns, but didn't mention a shotgun.

On August 13th, the Mammoth Hot Springs postmaster notified rangers that the post office had received a package addressed to Stevens. That package contained three ounces of marijuana. Two days later, Stevens received another package containing 28.2 grams of a mushroom plant that field-tested positive for psilocybin.

Source: Tom Morton, K2Radio.com.

Glacier NP One Killed, Four Injured When Rock Slide Hits Car

A 14-year-old Utah girl was killed and four of her family members were injured when their vehicle was struck by falling rocks on Monday, August 12th.

The family was traveling west near the East Tunnel on Going-to-the-Sun Road when the vehicle was hit by rockfall Monday at around 7 p.m. The rocks reportedly hit the top of the vehicle and shattered the rear windshield.

Air ambulance services responded to the incident but were unable to transport the girl due to her unstable condition. She was accordingly taken by ground ambulance to the hospital in Kalispell. The two adults in the vehicle suffered significant bruising and were taken to the hospital by emergency services; the two other children were also transported with minor injuries.

Officials estimate the rocks were between fist-sized and 12 inches in diameter and the amount of debris could have “filled the bed of a pickup truck.” The rocks fell from an unknown height from the mountains.

The incident was the first fatal injury from rockfall on Going-to-the-Sun Road since 1996, when a vehicle was struck in the Rimrocks area west of Logan Pass.

Sources: [USA Today](#); [CBS News](#).

Rocky Mountain NP Hiker Struck And Injured By Lightning

A 31-year-old man suffered numerous severe injuries as a result of a lightning strike that hit either directly or nearby while he was hiking below the tree line between Dream Lake and Lake Haiyaha last Saturday.

Other hikers on the trail found him and called rangers. The park’s SAR team transported him to the Bear Lake trailhead, where he was picked up by a helicopter and flown to the Medical Center of the Rockies in Loveland. His current condition is not known.

Source: Robert Garrison, [The Denver Channel](#).

Yellowstone NP Visitor Walks Up To Old Faithful For Photo

Last Saturday, a park visitor walked to within 20 feet of Old Faithful to take a close-up photo while others waited for it to erupt. When he walked back from the geyser’s mouth, the crowd began booing and he responded by flipping them off. Park staff followed him until rangers arrived on scene.

“He was well within the danger zone of this being a potential life-threatening situation because it could have gone off at anytime,” said visitor Devin Bartolotta, [who witnessed and videoed the event](#).

Old Faithful erupts every 35 to 120 minutes, spewing 3,700 to 8,400 gallons of boiling water 90 to 184 feet into the air for up to five minutes. The temperature of the water at the vent has been measured at 204 degrees Fahrenheit.

Source: David Strege, [USA Today](#).

Cape Hatteras NS Investigation Into Multiple Tire Slashings Culminates In Arrest

A 62-year-old Dare County man has been charged with six counts of damaging property in connection with a series of tire slashings that have occurred in the park.

Richard Perrot was caught in the act of slashing vehicle tires in the parking lot of Ramp 23 on the afternoon of Sunday, August 11th. His arrest occurred after rangers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife officers observed him in the act of puncturing tires on a Jeep Cherokee.

Since the beginning of 2019, at least 66 vehicle tires have been slashed in Cape Hatteras parking lots, with other slashings inflicted on vehicles north of the park. The majority of the vehicles that were vandalized were sport utility vehicles.

The Dare County Sheriff's Office, Kill Devil Hills Police Department, Nags Head Police Department, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Dare County Communications Center, and the National Park Service's Investigative Services Branch assisted the park with the case.

Perrot's motive remains unknown.

Source: Karl Pugh, [OBX Today](#).

Denali NP Hundreds Of Tourists Stranded Overnight By Damage To Park Road

About 300 tourists were stranded in the park when heavy rains triggered a mudslide and runoff damaged the park road last Friday.

By Saturday afternoon, road crews had cleared one lane of the road and buses returned all of the visitors to the park entrance.

"Our team did an outstanding job responding to multiple debris slides along a pretty remote section of road," said Erika Jostad, Denali's chief ranger. "The geohazard team monitored conditions while the road crew was clearing debris. It was a great example of teamwork."

Earlier on Friday, the park's superintendent closed the road to all traffic at mile 30.

Similar debris flows led to daylong traffic restrictions last week. Continued heavy rains since kept the road and surrounding tundra saturated with water.

Source: [Associated Press](#).

National Park System Follow-ups On Previously Reported Incidents

Below are short follow-ups on incidents previously reported in this newsletter.

- *Yellowstone NP* – Last week's edition carried a report about the sentencing of Curtis Faustich for setting an arson fire in the park. The story was taken from a KTWO news report that correctly stated that Faustich was a seasonal – but didn't add that he was a concession seasonal, not a park seasonal. Thanks to Dan Moses for catching the omission and sending a more detailed and accurate summary, which you can find at the following link. Source: [Powell Tribune](#).

National Fire Situation

National Interagency Fire Center Preparedness Level Drops To PL 2

NIFC has dropped the national preparedness level a step to PL 2 (FYI: NIFC has been at PL 2 on August 20th on only three other occasions in the past two decades; it's been at PL 3 three times, PL 4 three times, and PL 5 ten times).

Forty-five large fires were burning in 12 states on Tuesday, with new large fires reported in Montana, Oklahoma, and Texas.

No large fires were reported in NPS areas on yesterday’s NICC summary.

NPS/Interagency Fire News – Stories pertaining to wildland fire and fire-related activities that involved the NPS and its fellow agencies.

- *Smokey Turns 75* – In case you missed it, Smokey Bear – aka Smokey “The” Bear – turned 75 on Friday, August 9th. Smokey is the longest-running public service ad campaign, first appearing on a poster on August 9, 1944. “In the 1950s, the Forest Service and the Ad Council began producing public service announcements to run on radio stations with a song which — for rhythmic reasons — placed a ‘the’ between ‘Smokey’ and ‘Bear,’ and pairing him with some famous celebrities, like Roy Rogers.” You can read a short bio of Smokey at the following link. Source: Brian Naylor, [NPR Morning Edition](#).

Resource Commitment Trend

Category	August 6th	August 13th	August 20th
Area Command Teams	0	0	0
NIMO Teams	2	0	0
Type 1 Teams	1	1	2
Type 2 Teams	6	7	2
Crews	257	152	78
Engines	390	286	247
Helicopters	101	55	34
Total FF/Overhead	9,169	6,311	3,820

Fires/Acreage

Category	2019 Total	2009-2018 Ave	2019 Variance
United States: YTD Fires	30,743	43,042	- 29%
United States: YTD Acres	3,767,941	5,016,218	- 25%
Canada: YTD Fires	3,703	---	---
Canada: YTD Acres	4,455,357	---	---

Sources: [NICC Incident Management Situation Report](#); [National Interagency Fire Center](#); [IMSR Archives](#); [InciWeb Incident Information System](#).

Congressional Actions

Reports on legislation, upcoming hearings and new public laws of relevance to the national parks, prepared by Don Hellmann, former assistant director, legislative and Congressional affairs for the National Park Service.

New Public Laws

Nothing to report.

Senate Actions

The Senate is in recess until September 9th.

House Actions

The House is in recess until September 9th.

National Park Service

National Park System

A summary of articles pertaining to management and oversight of the NPS, to current trends and issues affecting the National Park System, or to either all or parts of the entire system.

- *NPS To Commemorate 400 years Of African American History* – National parks will offer special programs this coming Sunday to commemorate the first landing of enslaved Africans 400 years ago in English-occupied North America at Virginia’s Point Comfort, now part of Fort Monroe National Monument. While Spanish explorers had previously brought enslaved people to what became the southern and southwestern United States, it was the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in English-occupied North America that led to African American bondage in the United States. The 13th Amendment ended slavery in the U.S., but the pursuit of equality and civil rights for all endures. August 25th will be a day of remembrance, healing, and reconciliation throughout the country. National parks, including Fort Monroe, will host programs and participate in a nationwide bell ringing at 3 p.m. EDT. Everyone across the country is encouraged to come together in solidarity to ring bells simultaneously for four minutes—one minute for each century—and mark the occasion on social media with #RingToRemember or #400Years. The 400th anniversary is a year-long commemoration and conversation to recognize and highlight 400 years of African American history and accomplishments. August 25th also marks the 103rd anniversary of the legislation that established the National Park Service. All national parks will offer free admission for the day. Source: [National Park Service](#).

Around The Parks

Park reports are in alphabetical order. Included are proposals in the works for new areas or changes in designation for current NPS units.

- *Glacier NP* – A collection of historic cabins lining the shores of Lake McDonald that have come into park ownership over the years are set to be managed for their most practical use under a newly-announced plan. Some date back to the early 1900s and many need repair; most are listed on the National Register. The park will be formulating a strategy to guide the management of the properties and acquire funds for their preservation before the buildings deteriorate to the point where demolition and removal are the only available options. An “adaptive decision framework” has been developed that includes five different management options – historic leasing, assigning to an interested concessioner, NPS administrative use (such as park housing or offices), stabilization, or removal. Source: [National Parks Traveler](#).
- *Glen Canyon NRA* – The Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies has posted to its website a film called “Seldom Seen Sleight,” winner of this year’s Yale Environment 360 Video Contest. “Seldom Seen Sleight” is Ken Sleight, 89, who rafted and hiked Glen Canyon in the 1950s and 60s before it was flooded and was the inspiration for the character Seldom Seen Smith in Edward Abbey’s *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. The 12-minute film includes an interview with Sleight and uses “never-before-seen archival footage” of the canyon before it was flooded. Source: [Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies](#).
- *Harpers Ferry NHP* – The American Battlefield Trust has purchased an important historical property known as Allstadt's Corner and transferred it to the park. Allstadt's Ordinary, built circa 1790, played an important role in John Brown's 1859 raid on the federal arsenal, and the

surrounding farm saw action during the 1862 Civil War Battle of Harpers Ferry. Source: [American Battlefield Trust](#).

- *Statue of Liberty NM/Ellis Island NM* – New York City has launched a campaign against vendors scamming visitors near the location where the NPS concessioner sells tickets for the boats to Liberty and Ellis Islands: “As promised, city officials are taking action against the illegal ticket hawkers who prey on tourists heading for the Statue of Liberty,” reports the *New York Daily News*. “Any visitor to the Battery can’t miss the official-looking phalanx outside the Bowling Green and South Ferry subway stations, with deception pitches like ‘check in for the Statue of Liberty.’ When the unsuspecting say that they don’t have tickets, the hawkers offer ‘express tickets,’ which is illegal since they can’t sell or offer for sale in the park (and a lie since the promised 1-hour express trip often takes far longer). It’s also a scam since their boats don’t land at either Liberty or Ellis Islands. And it’s a rip-off, since their price is \$35, twice the \$18.50 of the National Park Service-approved Statue Cruises trip, which does stop on both islands.” Initial efforts focus on requiring these vendors to tell customers that their boats don’t land on either island and on “expelling” one of the worst offending operators. Source: Editorial Board, [New York Daily News](#).
- *USS Arizona Memorial* – The memorial, which was closed in May 2018 after the dock was damaged in a high tide event, is scheduled to reopen this fall. Over the last few weeks, several groups of Navy volunteers have been going helping to clean it in preparation for the much-anticipated reopening. The dock has a new anchoring system and the ramp from the dock to the memorial will be installed over coming days. Source: Nikki Schenfeld, [KHON News](#).
- *Washington Monument* – The NPS has announced the date and time for the reopening of the monument, which has now been closed for three years in order to modernize the elevator control system and construct a new security facility. It will be at 9 a.m. on Thursday, September 19th. The press release also has an interesting addition, what looks to be formulaic language that we’ll be seeing again: “The re-opening of the Washington Monument is another example of how the Trump Administration is enhancing visitors’ experiences at national parks and public lands by better meeting critical infrastructure and maintenance needs.” Source: [National Park Service](#).
- *Yellowstone NP* – KTVQ in Billings, Montana, has posted a series of stories, videos and pictures commemorating the 60th anniversary of the massive 7.3 1959 Hegben Lake earthquake, which took 28 lives outside the park along the Madison River and also had a number of impacts on the park, including the creation of 160 new geysers. The third of the four stories deals with the park and includes interviews with NPS and Xanterra historians. It can be found [at this link](#); you can jump from there to the other three pieces. Source: Chet Layman, [KTVQ News](#).

The Federal Government

This section will return in the next edition.

Climate and Conservation

This one, too...

The Coalition

Summary of recent developments within the Coalition, including some of the actions that CNPCA took on your behalf.

- *Endangered Species Act* – The Coalition condemned [the administration’s weakening of the Endangered Species Act](#). Chair Phil Francis had this to say: “This administration continues to disregard the importance of sound science and monetize the value of our resources. They continue to ignore the impacts of climate change and prioritize the economic costs of

protection. Oil and gas drilling, and industry now have a clear path to build in critical habitats that are home to some of our most endangered species. Our world is struggling with a climate crisis and instead of taking steps to protect our planet, the Trump administration implements policies and procedures that place our natural and cultural resources at risk. It is prioritizing the interests of lobbyists and big industry over the wishes and interests of the American people.” [Click here](#) for the full quote.

Source: Emily Thompson, Communications and Advocacy Coordinator.

Park People

NPS Alumni

Passing Of Michael Smithson

Michael Smithson, 66, passed away peacefully at Olympic Memorial Hospital in Port Angeles on the evening of July 30th due to complications of 44 years of paraplegia. He was surrounded by family and friends as he took his last breath and was at peace as his loved ones sang him goodbye.

Michael spent his childhood on military bases, both in the U.S. and abroad, and filled much of his free time exploring the natural world around him. He was an avid hiker and climber throughout life, as well as musician and artist.

He went on to study biology, among other subjects, as part of the first graduating class at Evergreen State College, where he met his beloved wife of 31 years, Lizbeth Smithson.

Michael and Lizbeth moved to Estes Park, Colorado, in 1977, where he began his National Park Service career at Rocky Mountain National Park. He delighted in his days in the field inspiring visitors and sharing a deep appreciation of the natural world with his colleagues.

While in Rocky Mountain he became the first paraplegic to climb Longs Peak along with Mike Donahue and Mike Morris. In 1986 he was awarded the Freeman Tilden Award, the highest award given in the National Park Service in interpretation, as well as the Outstanding Handicapped Federal Employee of the Year award.

In 1988 Michael and his family moved to Port Angeles, where he became assistant chief of interpretation and later chief of interpretation at Olympic.

He continued his work inspiring those around him and made significant inroads in the area of accessibility throughout the park. He was awarded the Sequoia Award for ongoing contributions in interpretation in the National Park Service in 2004, and his legacy is remembered in interpretive walks at Lake Crescent and the main visitor center in Port Angeles, along with the many relationships he developed in his long career with the NPS.

He is survived by his children, BenJavin Smithson, Kate Smithson; son-in-law, Kyle Tallmadge; grandchildren, Carter and Kai; sister, Dana Linn; Scott Linn (brother-in-law); in-laws Joe and Karen VanMeter, Sue and Mark Houghlum, Chuck VanMeter, Leslie VanMeter; furry child, Lily; as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews and dear friends.

A gathering in his memory will be held in Port Angeles, in July of 2020. Memorial contributions can be sent, in his honor, to Olympic National Park via <https://wnpf.org/donate-now/> (designation: Olympic National Park), or a tree can be purchased in his honor at www.arborday.org/.

From The Archives

This section contains incidents taken from *Morning Report* issues published during the corresponding period (approximately) 25 years ago in 1994. All entries appear in the original verb tense; “submitters” are those people who originally submitted the incident report.

- *Canyon de Chelly NM* – While attempting to arrest and handcuff one of two intoxicated men who were harassing park visitors at Ledge Ruins overlook on the afternoon of August 10th, Ranger William Yazzie was hit with a rock by a third person, then attacked and overpowered by all three subjects. He attempted to use his sidearm and two shots were fired during the struggle. Yazzie was able to release the weapon's magazine before he lost it. A witness, one of the local jewelry vendors, alertly picked the weapon up from the ground and ran from the area; she later turned it over to police. Yazzie was taken to the medical center in Chinle, where he was treated for a broken nose, concussion and lacerations on both ears and scalp, then flown yesterday afternoon to a hospital in Flagstaff for further assessment. A CISD debriefer and regional SET team have been sent to the park; Regional Director John Cook and Regional Law Enforcement Specialist Sal Lauro flew to the park yesterday morning. Yazzie has been with the NPS since 1988, when he began working at Bandelier. He has been at Canyon de Chelly since late 1992. Submitted by Assistant Superintendent Dale Thompson and Southwest Regional Office PIO.
- *Mount Rushmore NM* – During the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, which was held from August 8th to August 14th, over 39,000 bikers on about 27,000 motorcycles visited the park – an increase of around 25% from the same period last year. Members of 31 different outlaw motorcycle gangs were observed in the park during the period. Traffic was chaotic at peak times; although there were numerous minor incidents, no significant problems were observed. Officials estimate that about 175,000 people attended the event, which is held in the town of Sturgis, about 50 miles northeast of the park. Badlands, Devils Tower, Wind Cave and Jewel Cave also felt some rally impacts. Submitted by Mike Pflaum.
- *Whiskeytown NRA* – On the afternoon of May 22nd, rangers discovered that five 55-gallon drums of suspected hazardous material had been dumped in the Clear Creek area, about a quarter mile downstream from a dam on that river. The illegally-dumped waste contained beryllium and magnesium metal powders. On August 12th, a 26-year-old Redding man was indicted by a federal grand jury in Sacramento on three counts of violations of the Federal Clean Water Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The indictment stemmed from a three-month investigation by the NPS, EPA's Criminal Investigation Division, the FBI, and BLM. If convicted, the man faces up to five years in prison. Submitted by Chief Ranger Larry Carr.

Acknowledgements

This newsletter comes to you through the efforts of a number of people:

- Production: Steve Pittleman
- Regular Correspondents: Don Hellmann, Dennis Burnett, Rick Smith, and Duncan Morrow
- Issue Contributors: Barb Maynes, Bob Martin, Dan Moses, Mark Forbes

If you see something that might be of interest to Coalition members, send it to Bill Halainen at the Weekly National Park System Report: BHalainen@gmail.com. Please don't submit them via his personal email address or Facebook page.

A Closing Observation

"It seems to us that the true value of the parks to America could not be more clearly shown than by the fact that, in a time of anxiety and restlessness, they [are] immensely useful to large numbers of our people. Undoubtedly, too, they have been a strong influence for stabilization [and] good citizenship."

[Director Horace Albright](#)

The *Weekly National Park System Report* is a publication of The Coalition To Protect America's National Parks. It is prepared by Coalition member Bill Halainen, former editor of the *NPS Morning Report*, and produced and disseminated by Coalition member Steve Pittleman.

The Coalition is a non-profit organization of past and current NPS employees and their allies that “studies, educates, speaks, and acts for the preservation and protection of the National Park System and mission-related programs of the National Park Service.”

To receive a copy of this free publication, join or support the coalition. Any current, retired or former salaried employee (GS, wage grade, seasonal, temporary, or SES) of the National Park Service can join the Coalition ([click on this link](#)). Coalition supporters can also join and receive the newsletter ([click on this link](#)). If you need to contact the Coalition office on other matters, including changes of address, [click on this link](#).

--- ### ---